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## WAIS in Business: A Scenario

To give an overview on how a professional might use the Internet in business, the following scenario shows how an executive might use these navigations techniques to find a lead, research a company, develop background on an industry, and get enough information to make a personal contact. While this story is fictitious, the servers referred to are currently available on the Internet.

Every morning, when Christine Anderson, vice president of sales at Telephony Consultants, comes to work, she turns on her computer, connects to the Internet, launches Mosaic, and checks the morning's electronic edition of The Wall Street Journal. The newspaper is part of the DowVision information service by Dow Jones Inc. Even though the Internet version of DowVision is located on a server in the San Francisco Bay Area and Christine is in Pittsburgh, she can search interactively, getting immediate responses to her queries.



Figure 2-2. Top news stories in The Wall Street Journal as presented in Mosaic. While Mosaic is a Web browser, DowVision on the Internet is actually a collection of databases indexed on a WAIS server. (The server receives an automatic newsfeed, periodically indexes the documents and makes them available on the Internet.) By using a gateway between the WAIS protocol and the Web protocol, WAIS searches can be packaged as hypertext documents and viewed on Web browsers. This is how Christine views her morning paper.

Always on the lookout for new business, Christine takes a look at the Prexxtron story to see where the company is relocating. To read the whole story, she simply clicks on the headline and the story is displayed.

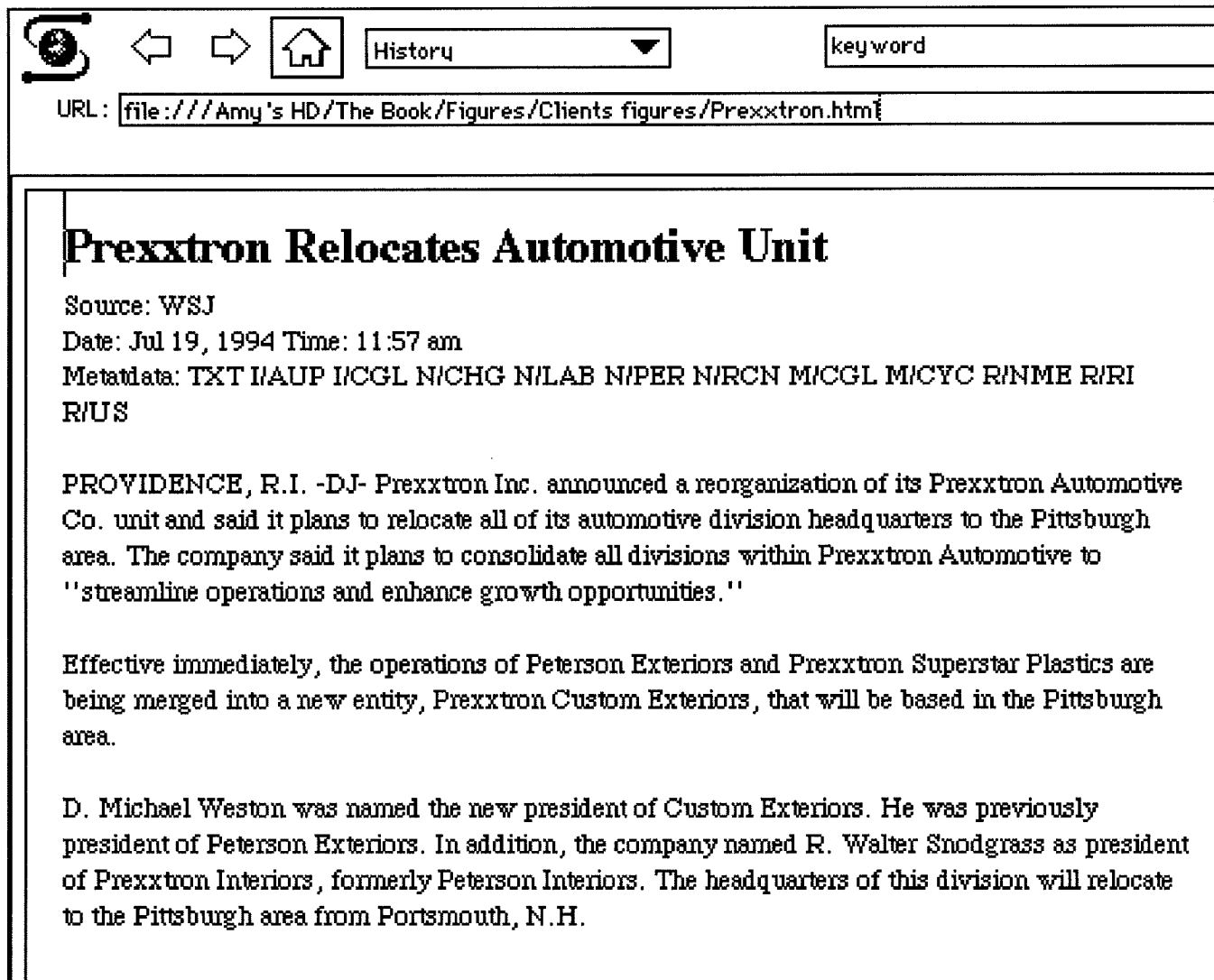


Figure 2-3. About two seconds after Christine clicked on the headline, the article is displayed on her screen. By clicking on the headline, Christine told the WAIS server to show her the document. The server located the document, packaged it as a Web document and sent it to Christine's computer. Mosaic then displayed the article on her screen.

"Hmmm," Christine says to herself, as she reads the article. "They're moving to Pittsburgh. I have to talk to them about their telephone systems. I'd better learn something about this company." To find more articles about Prexxtron, Christine searches all the DowVision wires with "Show me more about Prexxtron Corp." About two seconds later, she gets back a hit list of headlines to documents that match her request, ranked in order of relevance. Each headline is a hypertext link. The hit list is shown in Figure 4.

\*\*\*Picture of searching dowvision with query "prexxtron corp."

Figure 2-3. When Christine presses the "Send" button, she is sending a query to the WAIS server, asking to search all the DowVision databases. The server doesn't actually understand the sense of the question; instead

it takes the uncommon words in Christine's query ("Prexxtron Corp.") and searches an index of all the words in all the databases. The entry for Prexxtron in the index points to the documents that contain the word. The server then gets the headlines for those documents, creates a hitlist, packages it up as an HTML document, and returns the hit list to Christine.

### **\*\*\*Picture of hit list**

**Figure 2-4.** The hit list is relevance-ranked, with the most relevant documents at the top of the list. Each headline also has a score on a scale of 1 to 1000. The top story always has a score of 1000.

Several stories of the headlines look good to Christine. To receive the ones she wants, she clicks on the headline and a few seconds later the actual document is displayed on her screen.

In the course of her research, Christine has determined that Prexxtron may be a strong sales prospect. They are moving a factory and executive offices to Pittsburgh. In addition, they are part of a geographically distributed company, so they may be interested in Internet connections. Christine asks Tom Stevens to put together a preliminary proposal and presentation for Christine to use in her initial meeting with Prexxtron.

Tom searches Telephony Consultants' current and previous contracts to see if they have already done a job similar to Christine's description of Prexxtron. For his more focused searching, Tom will use a dedicated WAIS client instead of Mosaic. He uses WAIS for the Macintosh, an early client that features click-and-drag operations. (put sidebar about searchers interface opposite this page).

Because Telephony Consultants has many offices around the country, each with its own set of databases, the company uses the Internet to connect all the offices together. Only Telephony employees are allowed to access these databases.

To get a list of all the contracts databases in the company, Tom first contacts Telephony's "directory of servers," a database of all WAIS servers in the company. There is also a directory of servers for publicly available databases and, of course, many other organizations run their own directory of servers.

The WAIS for Macintosh program, shown in Figure 5, has several different windows. The top window is where queries are entered. The middle right window contains a list of sources to be searched. The bottom window displays search results.

Since Tom's client is configured to always start with the Telephony directory of servers in the Sources window, Tom just enters his query: "Show me all the contracts databases." He clicks on the "Run" button and a few seconds later he gets a list of all the company servers that have something to do with contracts.

### **\*\*Figure 5- above query with results**

**Figure 5:** Searching the directory of servers yields a hitlist of source descriptions.